

THE
H. C. MORRISON CASE
A STATEMENT OF FACTS;
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LAW

...BY...

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"Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?"—*Nicodemus.*

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THE H. C. MORRISON CASE.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT.

A large part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is agitated on account of the trial and expulsion of Rev. H. C. Morrison, a local elder, belonging to High Street Church, Lexington, Ky. Brother Morrison is editor of "THE METHODIST AND WAY OF LIFE," published at Louisville, Ky., and for several years has been engaged in very successful evangelistic labors in various parts of the United States. The wide circulation of his paper, the remarkable success of his evangelistic labors, the high character of the man, and especially his connection with what is generally known as the "Holiness Movement," have all served to give prominence to the case and to elicit an unusual interest on the part of our people.

His trial does not affect him alone. Questions are involved which greatly concern the church. All Southern Methodism is interested in the issues that are connected with this unfortunate affair. The rights and powers of presiding elders and preachers in charge; the sphere, privileges, and amenability of local preachers; evangelists, their right to exist, their regulation and control; the Wesleyan doctrine of Entire Sanctification, as a work of grace subsequent to regeneration; the "Holiness Movement," with its camp-meetings, associations and literature, all are directly or indirectly involved.

It is not strange, therefore, that there should be great demand for information in regard to this case. With a view to meeting this demand this little pamphlet is sent out. We do this not to stir up and perpetuate strife, but in the interest of harmony and peace. Nothing is to be gained by covering up and concealing the things that have been done. Right does not dread the light. Want of information often breeds suspicion and mistrust. Where great interests are involved and strong convictions exist, want of understanding is apt

to end in misunderstanding. Partial and partisan statements are to be deplored; but a fair and candid presentation of principles and facts, set forth without asperity and without personal bitterness, will allay anxiety, dispel misgivings, and minister to quietude and peace. In this pamphlet we have tried to give a plain, unvarnished statement of facts and to set before the reader a calm, dispassionate discussion of the law involved. However well we may have succeeded, we protest that this investigation was begun and carried forward not merely to vindicate a friend, but with a sincere desire to know the truth and to determine the right.

It is due Brother Morrison that such a statement be set before the world. At the time of his trial he felt that it was best for him to make no resistance, and instead of making a defense, he only suffered himself to be represented by a friend. He introduced no testimony, had no depositions, cross-examined no witnesses, and made no statement of his side of the case. This was not on account of any contempt for the authority of the church, but because at the time it seemed to him to be the best. We feel that it is not going too far to say that the verdict of the Quarterly Conference, deposing him from the ministry and expelling him from the church, was a surprise and a shock. No one suspected that his prosecutors would push the matter so far. Even those who had no sort of sympathy for the accused were wholly unprepared for a censure so severe. But now that the gravity of the situation is better understood, it is but right and proper that the facts upon which this extreme verdict was rendered should be placed before the public.

And this is the more necessary on account of the representations that have gone abroad. Much loose writing has been indulged. Many have written without any knowledge of the questions at issue. Much has been taken for granted. Much has been said that is wholly irrelevant. Many false issues have been raised and very erroneous impressions have been conveyed. In the midst of it all Brother Morrison has suffered no little injustice. Many have been led to the conclusion that he has been guilty of a most flagrant breach of ministerial courtesy and of a most inexcusable violation of church law. They will be surprised to know upon what

slender foundation these conclusions rest. While no charge has been brought against his personal character; while his trial directly involved only his *official* conduct, the reputation and usefulness of the man are bound to suffer if these representations are allowed to go unchallenged.

But there are other reasons for sending forth this pamphlet. Issues are involved in this trial that vitally concern the peace and well-being of the church. Questions are before us for settlement and they will never be settled until they are settled right. Neither factional prejudice nor the dictum of mere authority will be able to calm the elements and bring a restoration of peace. Open, manly discussion, leading to intelligent convictions as to the merits of the case, is the only way by which a permanent and satisfactory adjustment of differences can be secured. That there are two parties in the church, separated by a difference of opinions, views, sentiments and sympathies, it is useless to deny. But this of itself may not be an evil. Conflict between the two is not a necessity. They may be harmonized and dwell and work together without friction. But there is danger. If stringent and unlawful measures are adopted one party may drive the other out of the church. But this would be sinful and fraught with great peril and loss. No necessity for such a calamity exists, and all lovers of our Zion will exert themselves to prevent its occurrence. But in the adjustment of differences it will do no good to censure or abuse. Coercion will only widen the breach. Neither party can, or ought, to be driven. Men of intelligence and conviction are not managed that way. Differences must be stated and calmly considered. Concessions must be made and the rights of all must be recognized. Above all, brotherly love must continue. And if these manly and pacific measures obtain; if both parties will adopt a conservative policy and carefully avoid rash and inconsiderate words and actions, we dread not the future, but prophesy glorious things for the cause of Christ as represented by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

We are not an alarmist, neither are we given to magnifying things that are of no consequence. But we can no longer

close our eyes against the fact that differences exist, nor can we ignore the things that threaten our peace. That the trial of H. C. Morrison has grown out of these party differences and that it constitutes a break between the two factions can not be successfully denied. The issues involved are upon us and we might as well face them at once. Not in a spirit of contention and bitterness, but with an earnest desire to adjust the difficulties and prevent the evil from spreading further. An appeal has been made to the law. This is destined to play a conspicuous part in the settlement of the issues that are now before us. If this discussion can lead to a better understanding of the law and of the rights and duties of those who are under the law, it will not be sent forth in vain.

WHO IS H. C. MORRISON?

In order to a better understanding on the part of our readers, it will not be amiss to set before them a brief sketch of the man whose case we are to consider. H. C. Morrison is not a loose, unreliable, roving peripatetic or mountebank. He is not a professional agitator or a destroyer of churches. He is not an evangelist because he is a failure everywhere else. He is not a restless malcontent, going about to unsettle the faith and disturb the peace of the Lord's people. He is a Methodist, a man of God, a great preacher, a lover of the church and a helper of the brethren. He was admitted on trial in the Kentucky Conference in 1881. With the exception of one year, which he spent in Vanderbilt University, he continued in connection with this Conference until 1890. During this time he served the Concord and Stanford circuits, 11th Str., Covington, Highland, Danville and Frankfort stations, and for a while was in charge of Broadway Church, in Louisville. His rise was rapid. From the first it was seen that he had gifts that were far above the average. His sermons were brilliant, his social qualities of the highest order and his life above reproach. No preacher in the Kentucky Conference was more acceptable or useful. He was loved by his brethren and in demand among the churches. Burning with zeal, and possessing qualities that

were admirably adapted to revival work, his greatest difficulty was to resist the appeals of his brethren to assist them in protracted meetings. Moreover, he felt as truly called of God to this work as he was to preach the gospel. In order, therefore, that he might devote himself to it and meet the constant demands of his brethren, he asked for, and obtained a location in 1890. Since then his labors have extended from Virginia to California, and from Michigan to Louisiana. He has never sought a call; he has never been without a call. He has held successful meetings in Centenary Church, Chattanooga; McKendree, Nashville; Carondelet Street, New Orleans; First Church, St. Louis; and in leading churches in many cities, North and South, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Dr. S. A. Steele, whom he assisted in a meeting at McKendree Church, Nashville, said to the writer not long since: "Morrison is one of the greatest preachers in the connection." His preaching is "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." God owns it. Hundreds are converted under his ministry, and added to the church. We doubt if there is a man in the State who has had, in the same number of years as many genuine converts in Kentucky, as H. C. Morrison.

His revivals are not mere wild-fire. The work abides. Having had his assistance in two meetings, we have a right to speak upon this point. In both instances great revivals followed. The churches were awakened, sinners were converted, zeal was quickened and a wave of revival influence started that swept on until hundreds were brought to Christ. Seven or eight Methodist Churches have been organized in the two counties since these meetings were held, and the work still goes on.

Brother Morrison is a Methodist. He loves the Methodist Church and preaches Methodist doctrine. No taint of heresy is upon him. Repentance from Sin, Justification by Faith, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the Witness of the Spirit and Entire Sanctification, obtainable now, by simple faith in Christ, these are the doctrines he preaches.

He is a man of great earnestness and devotion. He is untiring in his efforts to win souls. He is true to his convic-

tions, and we hesitate not to say that he would die for them if need be. Yet he is gentle and kind, full of tenderness and love. The purity of his motives and the uprightness of his purposes no man can call in question. In his expulsion from the church, we have lost, not a mere "roving evangelist" and one "that troubleth Israel," but a good and true man, a great preacher and one of the most successful soul-winners we had among us.

WHAT HAS HE DONE?

But no matter how excellent his character or how great his usefulness in the past, if Brother Morrison has become a violator of the laws of his church, he ought to be dealt with as such. Law and a proper regard for authority are essential to organization and efficiency. Without law there will be confusion. Without regard for authority, the ends of law can not be secured. No man should be allowed to violate with impunity the rules and regulations of the church to which he belongs. If H. C. Morrison has done anything worthy of (ecclesiastical) death, he refuses not to die.

In setting forth the facts in this case we rely on Brother Morrison's own statements, made at the time, through *The Methodist and Way of Life*. The testimony introduced by the prosecution during the trial did not contradict any part of these statements, and added little or nothing of any importance to them. We heard this testimony as it was read in the progress of the trial, and noted it closely, and in all essential points it only corroborated Brother Morrison's statements, made through the press several months before. We think the reader can rely upon the following as containing all that is essential to the case:

THE CASE STATED.

For several years Brother Morrison has been engaged at various camp-meetings held in the State of Texas. At Waco, Scottsville, Greenville and elsewhere he has preached to the delight of thousands who have attended these annual encampments. Among those who were present at Waco in 1895, were certain persons from Dublin, Texas, a

city of about 4,000 inhabitants lying within the bounds of the Northwest Texas Conference, one hundred and five miles west of Waco. These persons, deeply interested in the work of the Lord and yearning for the souls of their fellow-citizens, conceived the idea of having a great meeting in Dublin, and desired to have Brother Morrison come and do the preaching. In February or March, 1896, three laymen, one a member of the M. E. Church, the others members of the M. E. Church, South, wrote to Brother Morrison asking him to come to Dublin and hold a camp-meeting in the city park, promising to provide the tent and make all the necessary arrangements. Brother Morrison knew nothing of any opposition, and as it is not an unusual thing for laymen to act in such matters he accepted their invitation and agreed to go.

Some time in July, a letter was received from Rev. W. H. Matthews, preacher in charge of Dublin Station M. E. Church, South, requesting Brother Morrison not to come to Dublin and insisting that he take no part in the meeting in the city park. To this letter Brother Morrison replied in a very kindly spirit, but insisted on coming and filling his engagement. Those who have had much experience in preaching the old Wesleyan doctrine of Entire Sanctification as a work of grace subsequent to Regeneration, are perfectly familiar with the wild reports, and gross misrepresentations that are usually sent abroad. Almost everywhere they meet with opposition growing out of these things, which soon gives way when the people come to a better understanding of the matter. And workers soon learn to pay but little attention to it. Doubtless, Brother Morrison felt that the opposition to his coming to Dublin had no foundation other than the wild rumors which usually precede a meeting of that kind, and entertained no doubt but that on a nearer view, Brother Matthews would see that he had been needlessly alarmed. These feelings may have been unwarranted, but they are very natural under the circumstances.

Some other correspondence followed. The presiding elder of Dublin District, Rev. E. A. Smith, wrote him and warned him not to come, threatening to test the law in case he did so. But inasmuch as he felt that no satisfactory

reason had been given why he should stay away, and confident that he was violating no law of the church by preaching at a camp-meeting in the City Park, Brother Morrison kindly, but firmly, held to his original purpose. Rumors of dissensions and divisions in the church he had heard many times before, but had always found them without foundation. Inasmuch, however, as opposition had developed, he demanded of those who had projected the meeting some expression from the community in regard to his coming. This was responded to by a petition, headed by the mayor of the city and signed by 230 of the citizens in and around Dublin, asking him to come and conduct the meeting in their midst. Following is Brother Morrison's account of the matter, taken from *The Methodist and Way of Life*, September 23, 1896:

"The camp-meeting here is interdenominational. The petition that came to me to hold the meeting was signed by something over 200 citizens of the various churches. The presiding elder and resident pastor of our church opposed the meetings and wrote to me not to participate in them. As the meetings were to be held in the City Park, and as our church was in no way responsible for, and had no control of the meetings, I could not, because of the opposition of these brethren, refuse to preach the great doctrine of full salvation to the hungry multitude. We arrived in the city September 4th. Evangelist R. L. Averill preached to a good congregation that night, and the Lord was with us.

"On the morning of Saturday, September 5th, the presiding elder and pastor came to see me and asked me to leave the camp-meeting and to take no part in the services. Of course I went forward with the work. Saturday and Sabbath were great days. The people came in great throngs and God poured out his Spirit in power.

"Monday morning the elder and pastor came and again asked me to leave the camp. I was there with a conscience void of offense; I was there under the Divine leadership, and however much I might regret trouble in the church, I was not free to leave. I committed the whole matter to God and went forward with the work, and the Holy Ghost fell on

every service. The brethren told me I could come before the committee of local preachers, who would prefer charges, if I wished to do so. I was busy with a multitude of convicted sinners and believers hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and did not meet with the committee. I am confident not less than twenty-five souls were either converted or sanctified while the committee was in session. The amusing feature about it all was that the wife of one of the local preachers came to the tent while the committee was at work, and while her husband was preparing the charges, she was most gloriously sanctified. She shouted and testified with great joy

"The presiding elder wrote me a note telling me that I was suspended from the ministry of the M. E. Church, South. This suspension came in a day ahead of the charges and specifications. I preached with unusual liberty that night; was glad to find that God had not revoked my call. The power fell on the people. I was notified that I could be present at the taking of depositions, etc., but remained at my blessed task. After the second night our tent could not hold the night congregations, which stood in great throngs all about on the outside quietly listening.

"All denominations were mingled freely in the altar services. Women in sunbonnets, and women in diamonds were crying aloud at the altar for pardon and cleansing. The very best people of the city came out in throngs, and while some of them did not fully endorse all we said, they plainly saw that a mighty work of God was in progress, and they bid us God-speed.

"Elegant homes were thrown open to us, and carriages were put at our command. Our tent was thronged with visitors; excellent food and delicious fruit were brought to us. We have nowhere met with a more cultured and hospitable people than we met with at Dublin.* * * * *

"During the nine days of the Dublin meeting we saw 165 persons either converted or sanctified. * * * * *

"Before we left a committee composed of the most prominent men of three or four of the Dublin churches were at work, arranging to secure a fine camp-ground for next year's

Holiness camp-meeting. So the mighty work goes on, and will go on, for God can work and none can hinder."

The specific offense of Brother Morrison and that out of which the trial has grown, was that he, a local preacher of the M. E. Church, South, went into the city of Dublin, in the vicinity of one of our churches, and took part in a camp-meeting, held in the City Park, in opposition to the expressed wishes of the presiding elder of the district and preacher in charge of Dublin Station. This, they contend, was contrary to the law of the church, and cite paragraphs 109, 110 and 120 of the Discipline, in justification of the position they have assumed. These paragraphs, according to their interpretation, give the presiding elder and pastor control of all services held by Methodist preachers within the bounds of a pastoral charge, and authorize them to forbid any Methodist preacher to enter these bounds for the purpose of conducting religious services. They protest that Brother Morrison was not arraigned for heresy. They concede that he is preaching the doctrines of the Methodist Church. They make no attack upon the purity of his character, but rest their case solely upon the supposed violation of the laws of the church. The paragraphs in question and the claims based upon them will be fully considered further on.

We would like for the reader carefully to note the following facts:

1. The meeting at Dublin was not projected by Brother Morrison. He only accepted the invitation of others who became responsible for its arrangements and management. If they did wrong in this, it is competent for the proper authorities to proceed against them.

2. The meeting was not held in the Methodist Church, nor in any property under its control. It was held under a tent, in the City Park, 400 yards or more (some say nearly a mile) from the Methodist Church.

3. The meeting was not under the auspices of the M. E. Church, South. It was not denominational. Members of various churches projected and arranged for it. The Methodist Church, as such, had nothing to do with it. If Brother Morrison had accepted an invitation from the Presbyterian

or Baptist congregation to hold a service in their church building or elsewhere, the presiding elder and preacher in charge would have had the same right to interfere that they had in this case.

4. Brother Morrison was invited to come to Dublin and take part in a "camp-meeting." Many of the camp-meetings throughout our land have originated with, and are under the management of laymen. This is the first instance on record in which a presiding elder and preacher in charge have proceeded against a man for taking part in such meetings.

5. It was not out of any sort of antagonism to the presiding elder or preacher in charge of Dublin, nor was it out of mere defiance of those who claimed authority, that Brother Morrison went forward with this meeting. He would have rejoiced in their sympathy and co-operation. He went to Dublin because he felt that Providence had opened a door and given an opportunity for him to preach the glorious gospel to multitudes of hungering people. He persisted in holding the meeting over the protest of the presiding elder and preacher in charge, because he felt it his duty to do so. He believed he had a perfect right under the laws of his church to hold the meeting, and he did not believe these brethren had any right to interfere. He did what he did, not because of any want of respect for his brethren, but from steady adherence to what he conceived to be his duty under the circumstances. It is only a malignant enemy who will impute evil motives to a man whose conduct can be easily explained upon better principles.

6. It should not be forgotten that this is the first case of the kind ever brought into our church courts for adjudication. The claims of the Texas brethren are not supported by any established interpretations of law, and it is easily possible that they may be mistaken in their judgment as to their rights and privileges in this case.

When the committee of local preachers appointed to investigate the case had reported a trial necessary and brought in a bill of charges and specifications, these charges and specifications were forwarded to Rev W T. Bolling, D. D., pastor of the church in Lexington, Ky., where Brother Morri-

son's membership was held. But when the matter was thus brought to the attention of Dr. Bolling, he refused to recognize the legality of these Texas proceedings on the ground that the brethren there had no jurisdiction in the case. Setting them aside, therefore, as illegal, he proceeded to appoint a new committee of investigation, composed of members of the Lexington charge. This committee formulated and sent in the charges on which Brother Morrison was tried. (For these charges, see the latter part of this pamphlet.) This committee also appointed G. W Graves, attorney-at-law, of Waco, Texas, to prosecute the case, doubtless upon solicitation of the Texas brethren. Brother Morrison was duly notified of these proceedings, but from the first adopted the plan of non-resistance. A. C. King, of Dublin, was appointed commissioner to take depositions. Brother Morrison was notified, but had no representative present. The depositions were taken in Dublin, November 26-28.

The trial was held in Lexington, Ky., on the night of December 29, 1896, ten members of the Quarterly Conference being present. Rev. J. Reeves, P. E., in the chair. Brother Morrison was not present, being at the time in Denver, Col., but was represented by Rev. H. B. Cockrill. Brother Morrison made no statement and no evidence was introduced in his defense. The depositions taken in Dublin by the prosecution was the only testimony heard.

The attorney for the prosecution demanded that Brother Morrison should be deposed from the ministry and expelled from the church, claiming the provision of the Discipline, in paragraph 287, as the grounds for this demand.

After hearing the pleadings the Quarterly Conference rendered its verdict, granting all that was asked by the prosecution. An appeal was taken, and the matter will come before the Kentucky Annual Conference at its next session for final adjudication.

WAS IT A VIOLATION OF LAW?

Before taking up these charges and specifications and subjecting them to examination and exposure, let us for a while give attention to a question that goes to the very

heart of this matter. Was it contrary to the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for H. C. Morrison to go into the city of Dublin, and engage in a meeting in the City Park without the consent of the preacher in charge of Dublin Station? The gravamen of the offense lies here. The whole structure of the prosecution is based upon the assumption that it is contrary to Methodist law for a Methodist preacher to hold any service *within the bounds* of a pastoral charge without the consent of the pastor. If it can be shown that no such law exists, then the whole case topples to the ground, and every charge brought against Brother Morrison will have to be dismissed. Let it be remembered that he has been brought before the bar of his Quarterly Conference, and the severest penalty that the court could possibly inflict has been pronounced against him. Had he been proven guilty of murder in the first degree, no severer punishment could have been imposed upon him by his church. Surely those who sat on this case and rendered this extreme verdict should have been thoroughly assured that there was a law in the Discipline making his action an offense. No man should be tried and condemned upon a mere sentiment. Somebody's idea of propriety, or what somebody thinks the *law ought to be* has nothing to do in such grave matters as this. Unless it can be shown that the Discipline clearly forbids the action with which Brother Morrison is charged, the verdict of the Quarterly Conference is utterly without justification or defense. If there was the least doubt upon this point, the accused was entitled to the benefit of that doubt. We shall now proceed to show that NO SUCH LAW EXISTS.

There are two ways by which the General Conference, the law-making body of the church, might have made the action of Brother Morrison illegal; first, it might have laid upon the local preacher a direct prohibition, forbidding him to enter a pastoral charge without consent; second, it might have so extended the authority of the pastor as to give him control of all services held within the bounds of his circuit, station or mission. But the General Conference *has specifically and emphatically refused to do both.*

At the last session of this body, strenuous efforts were

made by certain brethren, chiefly of the Memphis Conference, to secure the passage of a law that would enable the pastor to shut out local preacher evangelists and prevent their holding meetings in the bounds of a charge without his consent. The bishops in their address to the Conference had called attention to this matter, and, recognizing the fact that there was no law upon the subject, they suggested the propriety of inserting into the Discipline "an express enactment against such interference" (Journal, General Conference, p. 26). Various memorials and resolutions were introduced asking the enactment of such a law. The friends of the measure sought to secure the desired legislation by both of the methods mentioned above. First, they sought to have a direct prohibition laid upon the local preacher. Report No. 2 of the Committee on Revisals reads as follows:

"The Committee on Revisals respectfully offer the following report:

"The paper signed by J. H. Evans and S. F. Rankin asking a change in the Discipline in regard to local preachers in certain particulars has been considered and the committee *recommend non-concurrence.*

"The proposed change was this—Chapter III., Section XI., Paragraph 166: At the close of the paragraph add the following: '*No local preacher shall enter the recognized territory of any of our pastoral charges for the purpose of conducting protracted or revival meetings except upon the invitation of the preacher in charge.*'" (Journal, pages 110-11).

"*And the committee recommend non-concurrence.*" Now if the General Conference had taken up this report and adopted the proposed amendment notwithstanding the adverse recommendation of the Committee on Revisals, it would have been an unmistakable violation of the law for Brother Morrison to go into the city of Dublin and engage in any protracted meeting without the consent of the pastor. But the General Conference did not do this. The General Conference adopted the report of the committee recommending *non-concurrence*, and thus specifically refused to place the local preacher under any such restrictions. There is no other passage in the Discipline that can be construed into

any such prohibition. His license authorizes him to "preach the gospel according to the rules and regulations of the church" without imposing any geographical limitations. It is as clear as the noonday sun that in so far as the local preacher himself is concerned, he is not forbidden to go where he will "for the purpose of conducting protracted or revival meetings."

But there are two ways by which a man may be kept out of a house—by forbidding him to enter, and by having some one to close the door against him. Failing in their efforts to secure from the General Conference a direct prohibition against the local preachers entering in, the advocates of restriction next endeavored to get the General Conference to authorize the pastor to shut the door. But in this their failure was as complete and even more emphatic than in their former attempt.

AUTHORITY OF THE PASTOR.

It will be seen that if the preacher in charge can be invested with authority to control all services held within the bounds of his circuit, station or mission, the local preacher evangelist is then at his mercy and the pastor has power to prevent his entering his territory for the purpose of holding any service whatever.* A resolution was introduced signed by J. H. Evans, A. G. Hawkins and G. W. Wilson, all of the Memphis Conference, asking for just such a law as this. Their resolution went to the Committee on Revisals, which, on the eighth day of the session, reported as follows:

"The resolution proposes the following change in the Discipline:

"To amend chapter III., section IV., to the question 'What are the duties of a preacher who have charge of a circuit, station or mission? Let the answer read as follows:

*We are granting a great deal when we say this. No expression is more thoroughly indefinite than this one which we so frequently hear, viz.: "*Within the bounds of a circuit,*" etc. Who can tell what this means? Who can define "the bounds" of any circuit or station in all the church? The writer has charge of a station in the Kentucky Conference and finds upon the church register the names of persons who live in Tennessee, Virginia and Texas; yet they are in my charge and will not move their membership elsewhere. Are they *in my bounds?* Again there are members of the M. E. Church, South, living within half a mile of my church whose membership is not in my church. In point of fact, there is no such thing as *geographical bounds* to a circuit, mission or station.

"To supply the people with the ministry of the Word; to see that the sacraments are duly administered; and, *in the absence of the bishop and presiding elder to have control and direction of all public religious services held within their bounds, whether by traveling or local preachers.*'

"We recommend concurrence." (Journal, p. 265.)

Now, notwithstanding the indefiniteness of the expression "within their bounds," if this recommendation had been accepted by the General Conference, there would have been greater reasons for the contention that Brother Morrison was a violator of the law when he went into the city of Dublin and engaged in a protracted meeting without the consent of the preacher in charge. If this proposed amendment had become a part of the Discipline, the pastor of Dublin Station might have protested against the infringement of his rights and duties, and no one would have been disposed to call in question the fact that he had grounds of complaint. But fortunately the proposed amendment *did not become a law.* This report of the committee went to the calendar to await the pleasure of the Conference, and was afterward rejected by this body as we shall see further on.

The Committee on Itinerancy also had this matter under consideration. This committee "had before them a memorial from the Memphis Conference, signed by G. W. Wilson and Warner Moore, and other papers asking for changes in the Discipline, looking to the regulation of the labors of local preachers."

Here the whole question was thoroughly discussed. In a letter to the writer, dated "Columbia, Tenn., January 7, 1897," Dr. D. C. Kelley, who was a member of this committee and took a leading part in the discussion of the question, says:

"G. W. Wilson was a member of the Committee on Itinerancy and repeatedly urged in the meetings of that committee his desire to give the preachers the power to restrain local preacher evangelists from holding meetings within the bounds of the charge; so that the whole question was fully and thoroughly discussed and understood. The issue was squarely made and action had with full light."

The recommendation of this committee, submitted on the eleventh day of the session, is in the following words:

"As a result of our deliberations, we offer the following for insertion in the Discipline, at paragraph 118, page 81, the succeeding numbers of the section to be changed in order:

"Paragraph 118, *Ans.* 1. To preach the gospel, and, in the absence of the presiding elder or bishop, to control the appointment of all services to be held *in the churches* in his charge." (Journal, p. 267.)

Now we have here the two recommendations that were before the General Conference: One from the Committee on Revivals proposing to give the pastor "control and direction of all public religious services held *within their bounds*," and this for the avowed purpose of shutting out the local preacher evangelist from holding services without the consent of the pastor.

The other from the Committee on Itinerancy, giving him control only of "the appointment of all services to be held *in the churches* in his charge;" and this action was taken after full discussion and with perfect understanding of every point at issue. That this committee had no intention of acceding to the desire of G. W. Wilson and of passing in a recommendation that was the exact equivalent of that which had been reported by the Committee on Revivals is absolutely certain. In a communication to the *Central Methodist*, December 26, 1896, Dr. Kelley says: "The Committee on Itinerancy, after a long and painstaking discussion, by an overwhelming majority, reported what is now paragraph 120, giving control 'of all services to be held in the churches' to the preacher, presiding elder and bishop, and recommended that the legislation go no further. In other words, the committee thought it best not to attempt any control of meetings held *outside* of our own churches, and the General Conference sustained them in their view of the case. The word 'churches,' in the above law, was not accidental; it was placed there because we believed that it would be going too far to give into the hands of presiding elders and

pastors the control of all meetings *outside of property belonging to us.*"

Here is the testimony of one of the chief actors in this business. Indeed, Dr. Kelley was the author of the recommendation of the committee. If any one has been under the impression that the words "in the churches," were the equivalent of the words "within their bounds," the whole history of this matter and the very explicit testimony of Dr. Kelley prove that this is not the case. The words "in the churches," are utterly incapable of such a construction. They mean no such thing. It is the language of contrast and not the equivalent. The recommendation of the Committee on Revisals was an exceedingly broad and indefinite affair. The Committee on Itinerancy refused to go so far and limited the control of the pastor to services held "*in property belonging to us.*"

But Dr. Kelley continues: "Some of us, at least, remembered that had the bishops of England been empowered to control meetings held outside of their own churches, Wesley and Whitefield would have been denied a hearing in Great Britain, and Methodism had never come to the birth. To attempt to give more power to Methodist bishops, presiding elders and preachers in republican America than belongs to bishops and priests in the Established Church of England did not seem to your General Conference wise."

This testimony is of great weight and can not be ignored nor set aside. In determining the exact import of the law, nothing could be more explicit and decisive. Dr. Kelley certainly knew the meaning of his own words and had ample opportunity to know the full history of the enactment.

Rev. J. W. Newman, who was secretary of the Committee on Itinerancy, in a letter to the writer, dated Birmingham, Ala., January 18, 1897, says: "As to paragraph 120, in our Discipline, it means just what it plainly expresses—no more and no less. I formulated it and tried to make it plain. It was adopted as a result of the Committee's consideration of the matter of local preachers. There was a minority of the committee who strongly urged legislation limiting the field

of local preachers; but the majority of the committee thought no specific legislation was necessary and only put in paragraph 120 to more fully and clearly define the duties and jurisdiction of our pastors."

When this recommendation of the Committee on Itinerancy was put upon its passage, J. H. Evans moved to substitute for it the recommendation of the Committee on Revision! (Journal, p. 265.) By this motion both propositions were brought before the Conference at the same time. This body now had opportunity for comparison, consideration and choice. The issue, according to Dr. Kelley and Dr. Newman, had been "squarely made" and "fully and thoroughly discussed and understood," in the committee. Now the issue is squarely made before the General Conference, and here, also, action is had with full light.

In the letter to the writer, quoted from above, Dr. Kelley says: "The simple difference between what he (J. H. Evans) asked and what was done were the words 'within their bounds,' and the words in the paragraph as adopted, 'in the churches.' This point of difference was the only one made before the General Conference. As I now remember, the speeches made by Evans and Wilson, both of the Memphis Conference, were the only ones made in favor of including 'the bounds of the charge;' the only speech made in reply holding to the position of the paragraph as it now stands was made by myself and was less than five minutes in length." The vote was then taken and the General Conference promptly rejected the substitute and adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Itinerancy!"

In the light of these facts, what must we say of the attempt to construe paragraph 120, so as to mean that the preacher in charge is to control all services held "within the bounds" of his charge? Are we not warranted in saying that this either betrays a gross ignorance of the history of the enactment, or that it is a bold attempt to manufacture law and to bind upon our people a thing that was deliberately rejected by the General Conference? One has said that the "verdict in the Morrison case is not only without law,

but taken in the light of the action of the last General Conference, is a plain and simple nullification of law." Is he not right?

From the preceding discussion we have seen (1) that the General Conference specifically refused to forbid a local preacher to go into the bounds of a charge without the consent of the pastor; and (2) that it emphatically refused to give the preacher in charge control of all services held within his bounds, but expressly limited his authority to services to be held in property belonging to us. There is not one syllable in any enactment passed by the General Conference making the action of Brother Morrison an offense against the law of the church. When he went into the city of Dublin and engaged in the services in the City Park, he violated no provision of the Discipline and did nothing to subject him to ecclesiastical censure. Whatever persons may think of the propriety of his course, is not the question. He is not to be tried upon a mere sentiment, but by the law. Neither is it a question of what the law *ought to be*, but of what the law *is*. It is hardly competent for us to anticipate the action of the General Conference and try a man by a statute which some people think *ought to be enacted*. We are limited in our judicial proceedings by what the General Conference *has done*, and inasmuch as this body has refused to make his conduct an offense, we insist that Brother Morrison's expulsion from the church was without law; an outrage upon the rights of the individual and should not be allowed to stand.

Here the case might be rested. The conclusion is irresistible that H. C. Morrison violated no law of his church when he preached in the City Park, in Dublin, Texas, without the consent of the man who had charge of the local church at that place. If he violated no law at this point, he violated no law at all; and the whole bill of charges and specifications brought against him is not worth the paper upon which it was written. When the preacher in charge of Dublin Station undertook, by an exercise of Discipline, to prevent his holding this meeting he was clearly outside of the law and

was assuming powers that had been unequivocally denied him by the General Conference.

We are not without an episcopal decision upon this point. At the Louisville Conference, in September, 1895, the following question was submitted to the presiding bishop:

"Has a Methodist preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, traveling or local, a right to hold, in opposition to the known wishes of the preacher in charge, protracted meetings in another's pastoral charge?"

The answer of the bishop was this:

"In the absence of the presiding elder or bishop, no person, without the consent of the preacher in charge, has any right to hold meetings, 'in the churches in his charge.' But a good man will respect the spirit as well as the letter of the law."

—A. G. Haygood.

Here is an important opinion bearing directly upon the case in hand. If we look at it for a moment the import of the decision becomes perfectly clear. Bishop Haygood was asked the question: Has a Methodist preacher, traveling or local, the right to go into the pastoral charge of a brother preacher and hold meetings *anywhere* in that charge in opposition to the known wishes of the pastor? The answer of the bishop is substantially this: "According to the Discipline, no person has any right, without the consent of the pastor, to hold meetings *in the churches* in his charge. The letter of the law secures to the pastor the control of all meetings held in his churches, but goes no further than this. It does not forbid the holding of such meetings elsewhere within the bounds of the charge. But the spirit of the law is to avoid confusion and strife and to conserve the interests and integrity of the church. A good man, whether pastor or evangelist, will respect the spirit as well as the letter of the law. A good man in the evangelistic work will not recklessly rush into a neighborhood against the wishes of the pastor and willfully create division and strife. Neither will a good man in the pastorate put himself in opposition to a meeting merely because it is independent, or so strenuously insist upon the pastoral prerogative as to alienate and divide

the church and thus destroy the work of God." Evidently this was the meaning of the bishop. It would be difficult to make anything else out of his decision. We believe the General Conference did a wise thing when it gave the pastor control of all services to be held in the churches in his charge. Otherwise confusion would be inevitable. The evangelist should be the helper of the pastor and not his enemy. As to the case in hand, we know Brother Morrison. We know that he is not an enemy to pastoral authority. He is not in the habit of ignoring the preacher in charge, nor of laboring in conflict with his wishes. When he went into Dublin and took part in the meeting in the City Park, no doubt he was perfectly clear in his conviction that circumstances justified him in going there, and that he was doing God's will. He may have been mistaken; perhaps he was not. This is a matter of opinion, about which good men differ. But however this may be, it is absolutely certain that there is no law by which he can be arraigned and expelled from the church, and the action of his Quarterly Conference is wholly without the warrant of Discipline and should not be permitted to stand. If men think that his conduct should be made an offense, let them not outrun the General Conference, but wait patiently until the next session of that body, have the law enacted and given its place in the Discipline in the regular way. Then they may proceed to execute it.

THE PRESIDING ELDER.

But what was the relation of the presiding elder to this case? From the facts we have drawn from the records of the General Conference, the testimony of the men who drafted paragraph 120, and from the episcopal decision given by Bishop Haygood, it is very clear that the preacher in charge has no disciplinary right to control services held by others outside of property belonging to us. But in the case under consideration, the presiding elder of Dublin District played a conspicuous part; what authority had he?

The only passages in the Discipline relied upon by the prosecution as giving the presiding elder any authority in such cases are paragraphs 109 and 110. These paragraphs are in answer to the question, "What are the duties of a presiding elder?" and read as follows:

"Paragraph 109. *Ans. 1.* To travel through his appointed district in order to preach and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church.

"Paragraph 110. *Ans. 2.* In the absence of the bishop to take charge of all the traveling and local preachers and exhorters in his district."

In regard to these paragraphs we remark:

1. These provisions have been in the Discipline for more than a hundred years. In the course of time some verbal changes have been made, but they are substantially the same to-day that they were in 1792. If in all this time any one has ever thought of their conferring upon the presiding elder any such powers as those assumed by the presiding elder of the Dublin District, we would be greatly obliged for information as to when and where. His interpretation of these paragraphs is something new in Methodism.

2. It is not for us to say just what these paragraphs mean. The express provisions of other parts of the Discipline, however, utterly preclude the idea that the presiding elder is authorized to control the labors of, or to execute discipline upon a local preacher. These functions are, by express enactment, removed from him and lodged elsewhere. A local

preacher is amenable for his conduct, not to the presiding elder, but to the *Quarterly Conference*. (Paragraph 281.) The presiding elder can not control the labors of a local preacher. "It shall be the duty of local preachers to aid the *preacher in charge* of the circuit, station or mission to which they belong, in supplying the people with the ministry of the word. They shall accordingly be applied to by the *preacher in charge*, as soon as he enters upon his work, to state what amount of service they are able and willing to perform; *he* may then draw up a plan by which their labor shall be regulated," etc. (Paragraph 169.) When a local preacher is under report of immorality, it is the *preacher in charge* who is to appoint a committee to investigate the report, (paragraph 282); and if he be guilty of indulging improper tempers, words or actions, "the person so offending shall be repreahended by the *preacher in charge*," and not by the presiding elder, (paragraph 287). It is permitted, though not required, of a presiding elder, to notify a local preacher of a bill of charges and specifications found against him and he may preside over a Quarterly Conference by which a local preacher is tried; but he is not charged with authority to control his labors or to execute discipline upon him. This is the duty of the *preacher in charge* and can not be assumed by the presiding elder.

3. Even if the presiding elder had such authority over local preachers in his own district, he would have no such authority over local preachers whose membership is elsewhere. These would not be under his jurisdiction. At the last General Conference an effort was made to place the amenability of a local preacher either with the charge where his name is enrolled, or with the charge where he may happen to be living or laboring. But the effort failed and the amenability of a local preacher remains with his own Quarterly Conference where it has always been. (See *Daily Advocate*, May, 17, 1894.) The words "in his district," found in paragraph 110, mean nothing more than *those who hold membership* in his district. They may live, or be laboring anywhere within or without his bounds, but technically,

they are "in his district." And, according to established usage among Methodist people, no one is "in his district" who does not hold membership therein. The presiding elder of Dublin District had no more authority over H. C. Morrison than did the preacher in charge of Dublin Station. In a very strong and elaborate article in *The Methodist and Way of Life*, December 16, 1896, Rev T. A. Kerley says: "The parade they make about their authority and superiority in office is 'mere moon-shine.' In the matter complained of, Brother Morrison did not violate the law of his church, and his accusers in Dublin were in no sense his superiors in office, neither did they have any authority over him. The conduct of the Dublin brethren was autocratic, dictatorial and tyrannical. This is not all; when they appointed a committee of investigation and took formal action in the matter, they violated the plain letter of the law, and subjected themselves to the charge of mal-administration. No one but Brother Morrison's pastor had any authority to appoint a committee in his case."

THE TRIAL.

We have felt it important thus fully and clearly to set before our readers the points elaborated above. The discussion has been somewhat lengthy, but everything depends upon the matters here considered. If neither the preacher in charge nor the presiding elder had any right, according to the Discipline, to forbid Brother Morrison's preaching in the City Park or to execute discipline upon him, then the whole case falls to the ground. The charges upon which he was tried are utterly worthless, and when the case comes up on appeal to the Annual Conference, the committee will be bound to reverse the action of the Quarterly Conference and grant Brother Morrison an honorable acquittal. The Discipline is to be the battle-ground in the case. It is not a thing to be settled by mere declamation or appeals to sentiment and prejudice on either side. It is purely a question of law. Thorough and rigid investigation of the points at issue, followed by calm and judicial interpretations of the law involved, is the only way by which we can reach a satisfactory

conclusion of this matter. Time spent in investigating and elaborating these fundamental points will be time saved when we come to consider the indictments upon which the trial proceeded.

THE DISCIPLINE NOT COMPLIED WITH.

As we approach these indictments another question of law forces itself upon our attention and demands a brief consideration. We shall dismiss it as briefly as possible.

Brother Morrison was tried under paragraph 287 of the Discipline. This paragraph governs the process to be followed in case of improper tempers, words or actions. When the attorney for the prosecution made his demand upon the Quarterly Conference for the deposition and expulsion of Brother Morrison, he read this paragraph in justification of his demand. It could not have been otherwise. The offense of which he was accused was not an immorality, neither was it a heresy. There was no other rule under which the case could fall.

This paragraph reads as follows:

“Ques. What shall be done in case of improper tempers, words, or actions?”

“Ans. The person so offending shall be reprimanded by the preacher in charge. Should there be a second transgression, one, two or three faithful friends are to be taken as witnesses. If the offender be not then cured, he shall be dealt with as in case of immorality, and, if found guilty and impenitent, shall be expelled from the church.”

This class of offenses does not come to trial upon the first act. Upon the first transgression the offender is to be reprimanded by the preacher in charge. If a second transgression occurs, witnesses are to be taken and the official warning and entreaty is to be repealed. “If the offender be not then cured” the case is to take the same course as if it were an immorality. A committee of investigation is to be appointed and the matter regularly brought before the Quarterly Conference.

Now, in the case of Brother Morrison, were these requirements of the statute complied with?

We are aware of the fact that there was a pretended compliance with these requirements on the part of the preacher in charge of Dublin Station. This brother, out of the simplicity of his heart, took it upon himself to reprimand Brother Morrison. He then visited him the second time taking with him the faithful witnesses. Failing to secure compliance with his wishes, he proceeded to appoint a committee of local preachers to investigate the case. These reported a trial necessary and brought in a bill of charges. At this point, for some unaccountable reason, our brother arrested the proceedings and forwarded the charges to the pastor of Lexington Station. Why he did this is difficult to understand. *The Quarterly Conference of Dublin Station had the same authority to try Brother Morrison that W. H. Matthews had to reprimand him!*

But when the matter was referred to the pastor of the church where Brother Morrison's membership was held, he refused to recognize the legality of the proceedings of the Texas brethren and set them aside as without warrant and void. When this was done the case certainly had to be taken up *de novo*. The pastor of Lexington charge did not reprimand Brother Morrison nor take any of the preliminary steps required by paragraph 287, but proceeded at once, without previous labor to appoint an investigating committee. It was upon the bill of charges brought in by *this* committee that he was put upon trial. The trial that was held on the 29th of December, and that issued in his expulsion from the church, certainly originated with the preacher in charge of Lexington Station who utterly failed to comply with the requirements of the law, and for this reason we insist that the whole proceedings are null and void.

But if it be objected that these preliminary measures were taken at Dublin before the matter was referred to Lexington, we answer, first, that as a matter of fact, the Dublin proceedings were all set aside by the Lexington pastor as illegal and void. This answer is based upon his statement

made to the writer on the 27th of November, 1896. We answer further that it was not competent for the preacher in charge of Dublin Station to perform this part of the disciplinary process. A local preacher is amenable to his own Quarterly Conference. When guilty of any improper conduct his reprobation by the preacher in charge is a part of a disciplinary process originating with and proceeding from his Quarterly Conference, otherwise he would not be amenable to this body. The preacher in charge is but the organ or agent authorized to act for the Quarterly Conference and by whom this body does its work. This, therefore, can not be performed by *any* preacher in charge, but must be performed by *the* preacher in charge who is the agent and representative of the Quarterly Conference to which the local preacher is amenable. The pastor of Dublin Station had no right whatever to reprehend Brother Morrison, and the attempt to do so was an unwarranted assumption of power that belongs exclusively to another.

Take a parallel case. The amenability of a member of the Methodist Church is with the society to which he belongs. Suppose a member of a neighboring charge comes to the town in which I am preaching and is guilty of some improper conduct. Is it competent for me to take the preliminary steps and proceed to execute upon him this part of the disciplinary process? Is it not my duty rather to report the matter to the pastor of the society to which he belongs, who alone has the right to administer on the case? I can counsel and remonstrate as a friend, but I dare not undertake to execute discipline upon members of another charge.

Again: The amenability of a traveling preacher is with the conference to which he belongs. Such a preacher is made a connectional officer and resides in Nashville, far away from the bounds of his own conference. While here he becomes guilty of some improper conduct. Would he consider it legal for some Nashville pastor to proceed to the execution of discipline by reprehending him? So also a local preacher can be disciplined only by the Quarterly Conference to which he is amenable, and this, in its initiatory steps, can be

performed only by that preacher in charge who is the agent and representative of the Quarterly Conference. Hence, the steps taken by the pastor at Dublin were illegal. These steps were taken by no one else. Therefore, Brother Morrison was not tried according to law and the proceedings were null and void.

THE CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS.

We come now to the charges and specifications upon which Brother Morrison was tried. Our treatment of these will be brief:

"Charge 1. We charge H. C. Morrison, L. E., with contumacious conduct in persisting in resisting the authority of his superiors in office and thus violating his ordination vows, per Discipline, pages 238-248."

SPECIFICATION 1.

"Said H. C. Morrison, over the protest of W. H. Matthews, P. C., and E. A. Smith, P. E., the first of Dublin Station, and the latter of Dublin District, North-west Texas Conference, M. E. Church, South, did go into Dublin Station, September 4, 1896, and did engage in conducting and taking part in a protracted meeting in a public capacity, as a preacher, and when the presiding elder and preacher in charge did protest against said meeting being held in said charge, said H. C. Morrison did refuse to yield to their advice and authority, and continued said meeting."

SPECIFICATION 2.

"Said H. C. Morrison, at the time the first personal protest was entered by said presiding elder, E. A. Smith, on September 5, 1896, did declare his purpose to violate his ordination vows, if necessary, in order to carry on said meeting."

With reference to specification 2, we have only to say (1) that people in this country are tried for *what they do*, and not for what they *purpose to do "if necessary;"* (2) no one who knows Brother Morrison will, for a moment, believe that the remark which has become the foundation of this specifica-

tion was used with the evil intent here attributed to it. Brother Morrison is not the man to deliberately commit sin in order to carry on a protracted meeting. No doubt he did declare explicitly and strongly his purpose of going forward with the meeting. But he believed that he had a perfect right, under the laws of his church, to hold this meeting. He did not believe that E. A. Smith and W. H. Matthews had any authority to interfere or to control his actions; and he did not believe there was the remotest possibility of his violating his ordination vows by preaching in the Dublin City Park.

As to specification 1, the general facts related are not denied. H. C. Morrison did go into the *city of Dublin*, September 4, 1896, and did engage in a protracted meeting in a public capacity as a preacher. He did refuse to leave when asked to do so by the presiding elder and the preacher in charge. But we do most emphatically deny that this *sustains the charge*. This charge is of "contumacious conduct in persisting in resisting the authority of his superiors in office." The terms of the charge need defining. What is "contumacious conduct?" Webster defines *contumacy*:— "1. Persistent obstinacy; stubborn perverseness; pertinacious resistance to authority. 2. (Law.) Willful contempt of, and disobedience to, any lawful summons, or to the rules and orders of court, as a refusal to appear in court when legally summoned. Bouvier, in his "Law Dictionary," gives substantially the same definition. If, according to this, Brother Morrison has been guilty of "contumacious conduct," he has either been *persistent*, *obstinate*, *stubbornly perverse*, and *pertinaciously resistant to authority*; or, he has been guilty of *willful contempt of and disobedience to some lawful order of court*. It was no doubt the legal sense of the term that was intended in this connection. But before we can admit the truth of the charge, it is necessary that two things be established; first, *the authority of the court*; and, second, *the lawfulness of its order*.

We have already shown that neither the preacher in charge nor the presiding elder had any control over the meet-

ing in the City Park, and that neither could possibly have any authority over Brother Morrison. In this case the crime of "contumacious conduct" was impossible. First, they were in no sense his "superiors in office;" second, they had no "authority" in the matter; and, third, "persisting in resisting" their unlawful demands could not constitute the crime of contumacy.

Charge 2. "We charge said H. C. Morrison with violating the order and Discipline of the church."

Specification. "In disregarding the authority of the church as expressed in paragraphs 109, 110 and 120 of the Discipline of the M. E. Church, South, by coming into the borders of Dublin Station, over the protest of the presiding elder and the preacher in charge, and taking part in conducting a meeting which commenced September 4, 1896."

The conduct, which is made the basis of this charge, is the "*coming into the borders of Dublin Station*, over the protest," etc. Now we would like to know who had official control of Dublin Station, on and for ten days succeeding September 4, 1896—the preacher in charge, or the presiding elder? Certainly not *both*: and if the *presiding elder*, then paragraph 120, relating to the duties of the presiding elder, is not relevant. If the *preacher in charge*, then paragraphs 109 and 110, relating to the duties of the presiding elder, are not relevant. But inasmuch as neither had any authority over services held outside of *their churches*, and no power to execute discipline upon Brother Morrison, we must pronounce the charge not sustained.

Charge 3. "We charge said H. C. Morrison, L. E., with sowing dissensions by improper words and actions."

"*Specification 1.* Said H. C. Morrison, having received a protest from P. C., P. E., and official board of Dublin Station, not to come into the pastoral charge, knew that a division of the church was being produced, and dissensions would result, became a party to such dissensions and divisions, by coming and conducting said meeting in said Dublin charge, over said protest.

"*Specification 2.* Said H. C. Morrison, by giving direction

to laymen of the M. E. Church, South, concerning the arrangements and advertising of said meeting, and encouraging them to attend said meeting over the legally constituted authorities of the M. E. Church, South, thereby produced divisions and dissensions in the church."

It is claimed by our Texas brethren that this meeting has resulted in division and strife. The testimony introduced by them was to the effect that several church trials have taken place; that several had withdrawn from the church, and that other serious disturbances had followed. One had been expelled from Dublin Station; four had withdrawn; there had been one church trial in Greens Creek circuit; another on the Proctor, or Morgan's Mill Mission; in one place a Holiness prayer meeting had been started, and at another a local preacher had been holding protracted meetings! All these calamities they attribute to the Morrison meetings.

In the history of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the record of many divisions and dissensions. Strange as it may seem, the Prince of Peace, he, whose mission among men was one of peace and good will, said of himself, that he came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword; that the closest and strongest ties of earth should yield to the divisive forces of his Kingdom, and parents and children, kindred and brethren, should be arrayed in conflict against one another. History has confirmed the truth of this statement. When Jesus went into Jerusalem and wrought that notable miracle, opening the eyes of one who was born blind, the event was followed by the most serious disturbance in the church. They had a church trial. One member was expelled. The man who had been blind was "put out of the synagogue."

When Paul was at Ephesus, preaching the word of the kingdom, and confirming that message by works of mighty power, he came into conflict with certain men whose craft was endangered by the gospel he preached. A mighty uproar took place and the most serious consequences were narrowly averted.

When Mr. Wesley was planting Methodism in old England, and the kingdom was in a ferment on account of his

mighty works, the drunken and gaming clergy in certain places stirred up a furious mob, who tore down houses, and beat and robbed his unoffending followers, whose only crime was trying to save themselves and others from sin. And, strange to say, under the instigation of these same clergymen, warrants were issued for Mr. Wesley and his helpers and they were summoned to appear before the courts as disturbers of the peace!

Dissensions have often occurred. But when we undertake to locate the responsibility for these dissensions, we sometimes meet with things that astonish us. Who was responsible—the Lord of Glory, or the wicked scribes and Pharisees by whom he was opposed? Who created the uproar—Paul, the Apostle, or Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen? Who raised the mob—Wesley and his lay-preachers, or the drunken clergy of the Established Church? And these dissensions in Dublin—have they originated with the Morrison meetings, or have they grown out of the persistent opposition of the Texas preachers? There can be but little doubt that had these brethren adopted a proper course they would have had none of these things. Their own depositions show that Brother Morrison, in writing to the brethren, counseled quiet and avoidance of strife. And we have a statement signed by a very large number of citizens of Dublin, testifying that he, during the meeting, urged the people to stay in their churches and to be loyal to them. Now if, as we have shown, Brother Morrison violated no law of the church by holding the meeting at Dublin; and if, as we have also shown, the preacher and presiding elder were acting outside the law, and had no warrant of Discipline when they undertook to interfere with matters over which they had no control, why lay the responsibility for the consequences of their conduct upon Brother Morrison? Let it rest where it belongs.

Again. We would like to ask: Upon what charges were those persons tried whom they have expelled or suspended? What was their offense? What law of the church did they violate? And how was it all connected with the Morrison meetings? We paid very close attention to the reading of

the depositions presented by the prosecution, but if they contained one word upon these points it wholly escaped us. We submit that the mere fact that there have been church trials and disturbances since last September is hardly sufficient to fasten upon Brother Morrison the charge of sowing dissensions in the church. We need further evidence. That there have been troubles and that they are in some way connected with this unfortunate affair, we do not doubt. But whether they were due to the preaching of Brother Morrison, or whether they have grown out of the unfriendly attitude and unlawful opposition of others, is a point that needs to be clearly established.

But however this may be, this charge, like the others, depends upon the supposed right of the presiding elder and preacher in charge to interfere with the meeting in the City Park. When the axe is laid at the root of this tree, all its branches and appendages are destined to fall with it.

We have now gone over the most important features of this case. Much remains to be said. Many points have been left wholly untouched; some have been touched hurriedly and superficially. We have tried to treat, with some degree of thoroughness, three or four of the fundamental issues involved. The case is dependent upon these. If, as we have shown, there is no law forbidding a local preacher to go into a pastoral charge for the purpose of holding religious services without the consent of the pastor; if the General Conference refused to give the preacher in charge control of all services held in his bounds, but limited his authority to those held in the churches in his charge; if a presiding elder has no right to execute discipline upon a local preacher; and if in the trial of Brother Morrison important provisions of the Discipline were not complied with, then we do not see how an intelligent committee, on a review of the case, can fail to set aside the astonishingly severe penalty imposed by the Lexington Quarterly Conference. Until the matter reaches its final disposition, let all pray for the triumph of the right, for the peace of the church, and for the speedy coming of the Lord Jesus.

